



**AWARD-WINNING DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER ILYSE ROBBINS LEADS
PRODUCTION CELEBRATING FRIENDSHIP AND SECOND CHANCES**

***Kerry A. Dowling Makes Umbrella Debut Alongside Returning Favorites Anthony
Pires, Liza Giangrande, and more***

**Leading Regional Designers Janie E. Howland, Karen Perlow Bring Small-Town
Americana Vividly to Life**

CONCORD, MA— March 30, 2025 – Based on the beloved film that took home the Audience Award at The Sundance Film Festival, The Umbrella Stage Company’s *The Spitfire Grill* follows the journey of Percy Talbott, a spirited young woman who perseveres through personal hardship, violence and incarceration to seek redemption in rural Wisconsin. But in the small town of Gilead, she finds so much more – a second chance in a new community that she in turn transforms forever.

The production is helmed by award-winning Director/Choreographer Ilyse Robbins, whose recent projects include last season's *Lizzie* at The Umbrella, *Noises Off* (Lyric Stage), and the Elliot Norton Award-winning *All is Calm* (Greater Boston Stage Company) among others. The show's rich score by James Valcq and Fred Alley is marked by Americana folk rhythms, soaring melodies, and irresistible charm.

Says Producing Artistic Director Brian Boruta, “*The Spitfire Grill* is one of those hidden gems that are rarely produced. Its focus on community, rediscovery, and transformation

will uplift the spirit, and its soaring score will satisfy the soul. I can't wait for audiences to discover, or rediscover *The Spitfire Grill*."

The show runs Apr. 25-May 18 (press opening Sunday Apr. 27, 3:00PM), and select performances will feature engagement opportunities:

- Dinner & A Show packages are available for all Thursday night performances
- Talk Backs scheduled following performances on May 2 and May 8
- Childcare with art activities for youth ages 5-12 is available through The Umbrella's Kid Care program for parents interested in attending the May 4 matinee

The Umbrella is ADA accessible, a proud partner in the Massachusetts Cultural Council's EBT Card-to-Culture program, and provides free parking and free admission to its visual arts galleries. See <https://TheUmbrellaArts.org/SFG> for more information.

ABOUT ILYSE ROBBINS

Ilyse Robbins is an award-winning Director and Choreographer whose recent projects include last season's *Lizzie* at The Umbrella; *Assassins* (Lyric Stage), *Tell Me on a Sunday* and *Cabaret* (Peterborough Players); *Beehive and Little Women* (GBSC); *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Front Porch, Nora @ CST, GBSC: Elliot Norton Award-Outstanding Musical Production). Ilyse directed/choreographed *All is Calm* at GBSC (Elliot Norton Award - Outstanding Musical Production). Her original choreography for the World Premiere of *Swan Lake in Blue: A Jazz Ballet* at GBSC won the Elliot Norton Award-Outstanding Choreography and she directed the award-winning *Move on the Cha-Chas* at United Solo Festival NYC. Ilyse is a teacher, coach, and writer. She holds a BS in Communication/Theater from Northwestern, theater certification from BADA, and an Ed.M. from Harvard. www.ilyserobbins.com

ABOUT THE CAST

Returning Umbrella favorites include Liza Giangrande (*Lizzie*), Shonna McEachern* (*The Full Monty*), Anthony Pires Jr.* (*Tuck Everlasting, Parade*), Catherine Lee Christie (*Tartuffe*), joined by Kerry A. Dowling* (*A Man of No Importance, Speakeasy, Murder on the Orient Express, Lyric*) and Sean Donnelly (*Steel Pier, Sullivan Rep*).

CALENDAR LISTING & PRESS OPENING DETAILS

Theater | Performing Arts | Musicals

WHAT

The Spitfire Grill

WHO

By Music and Book by James Valcq, Lyrics and Book by Fred Alley, Based on the film by Lee David Zlotoff, Directed by Ilyse Robbins. Featuring Liza Giangrande, Kerry A. Dowling*, Shonna McEachern*, Anthony Pires Jr.*, Sean Donnelly, Catherine Lee Christie, Cristhian Mancinas-García, Kara Chu Nelson, Katie Pickett, and John Breen

WHEN

PREVIEWS: Apr 25 & 26, 2025

REGULAR RUN: Apr 27-May 18, 2025

PRESS OPENING: Sunday April 27, 2025 at 3:00PM

Thursdays & Fridays 7:30PM; Saturdays 8PM; Sundays 3PM*

*Sunday May 4 at 6:30PM, no matinee

WHERE

The Umbrella Arts Center, 40 Stow Street, Concord, MA 01742

ABOUT SUMMARY

A heartwarming musical based on the beloved film that lifts up the beauty in second chances and the transformative nature of friendship.

Tickets \$48-\$58 regular adult

Discounts for students, seniors, groups, Card-to-Culture eligible attendees

Group Discounts: Groups of 10 – 14 save 10%; groups of 15 and up save 15%. EBT, WIC, ConnectorCare Card-to-Culture discounts available. Contact the Box Office for more details.

Press Photos available from Stewart@TheUmbrellaArts.org, 978-371-0820 x211, [or online here](#).

ACCESS

The Umbrella is wheelchair accessible. Marked all-gender bathrooms available. Find additional accessibility info at <https://TheUmbrellaArts.org/tickets>

BOX OFFICE & PRESS TICKETS CONTACT

John@TheUmbrellaArts.org or 978-371-0820 x204

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